

TURN UP THE HEAT ON THE

SUMMER 2010/FALL 2010

DO YOU HAVE TO REFER YOUR PATIENT AGAIN?

This past quarter, Breathe Easy at Home focused much of its energy meeting with our legal, medical and community partners. Providers at the Medical-Legal Partnership Boston, Children's Hospital, and the Boston Asthma Initiative asked questions specifically related to a protocol for re-referring patients to the Breathe Easy at Home programs.

Sometimes, violations in apartments come back. Mold grows back or infestations find their way back. In these situations, we ask that providers

make new referrals on the Breathe Easy website. This re-referral process will allow us to collect accurate case referral information as well as to look into the reasons that some violations come back more frequently than others. These sorts of inquiries can lead to more work with property managers and ultimately, healthier housing in the city.

Please help us in this endeavor by making new referrals with Breathe Easy for patients who have recurring environmental triggers.

Breathe easy at home program

Housing Division - Breathe Easy Program

New Case Referral

| Patient Information | | hide |
|--|--|------|
| * Salutation: | <input type="text"/> | |
| * First Name: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Last Name: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Parent/guardian name if patient is a child | | |
| * Language: | <input type="text"/> | |
| * Gender: | <input type="text"/> | |
| * Phone (a): | <input type="text"/> Home <input type="radio"/> Cell <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> | |
| (primary phone) | | |
| Phone (b): | <input type="text"/> Home <input type="radio"/> Cell <input type="radio"/> Other <input type="radio"/> | |
| (alternate phone) | | |
| * Under Six? | Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> | |
| Asthma Diagnosis: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Asthma hospitalization?: | Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Unknown <input type="radio"/> | |
| Address Information | | hide |
| * Address: | <input type="text"/> | |
| * Apartment: | <input type="text"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Check if single family | |
| Which Floor? | <input type="text"/> | |
| Area: | <input type="text"/> | |
| Zip Code: | <input type="text"/> | |

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE BREATHE EASY COORDINATOR

Often, partners ask me what my role of the Breathe Easy at Home program is. What do I do? What does 'coordinating' Breathe Easy entail?

My work begins at the end of each quarter with organizing agendas for

meetings of the Breathe Easy at Home Steering Committee, where priorities are made for the next three months. General duties consist of tracking every new case and recording the neighborhood and initial

inspection date. Eventually, the violations found in the home and circumstances of case resolution will be added to the Excel spreadsheets for reports made to funders as well as presentations to providers.

I spend significant amounts of time in the ISD office working with their staff. Once inspectors hand in inspection reports, they go through several hands before they arrive on my desk in ISD. Updates are made in the Breathe Easy database and emails are sent to providers.

While current referrals are added to the database, I keep track of open cases to ensure that the most current information is available to providers. Currently, I do a quality control check every week to make sure old cases are brought up to date.

Lastly, outreach is a huge component of managing the Breathe Easy at Home program. This requires keeping track of and offering informational presentations to the thirty-eight registered clinics and hospitals as well as our community partners. Outreach also means making new materials to hand out at health fairs or post on our website, which I also manage and update.

In between these tasks, the Coordinator enjoys taking phone calls from patients and providers, answering questions and offering technical assistance. Please keep your questions and suggestions coming!

Amanda LaSane, Breathe Easy at Home Coordinator

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THE STORY ON COMPULSIVE HOARDING

Compulsive hoarding comes up frequently during Breathe Easy inspections. Hoarding occurs when “living spaces are sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed.” Hoarders can block exits, create fire hazards and the accumulation of clutter can significantly increase asthma triggers like dust and shelter for pests. According to the Boston University School of Social Work, the official definition of **compulsive hoarding** is, “The acquisition of, and failure to discard a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value.” (Power Point presentation by Christiana Bratotiis, PhD, LCSW on May 25, 2000).



“The acquisition of, and failure to discard a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value.”

For more information and resources about hoarding, please refer to the BU School of Social Work’s Hoarding Research Project homepage to find **training resources, newsletter updates** and contact information for **clinical intervention**: <http://www.bu.edu/ssw/research/hoarding/>

BREATHE EASY AT HOME PROGRAM ADOPTION

After working with the Rhode Island Department of Health, we have received word that a Breathe Easy at Home program in Rhode Island has obtained funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is now fully functional! You can find their program at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/projects/breatheeasyathome/index.php>

WHAT DO I DO IF MY PATIENT DOES NOT LIVE IN BOSTON?

A number of you have requested contact information for housing code enforcement agencies outside of Boston. Although our program serves only Boston, every city within Massachusetts operates under the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code. While we are not aware of asthma-specific inspection programs within the state, Boards of Health and city ISD’s can be found at this website:

<http://www.mhoa.com/roster.htm>

“After working with the Rhode Island Department of Health, we have received word that a Breathe Easy at Home program in Rhode Island ...is now fully functional!”

BREATHE EASY AND BED BUGS

Breathe Easy is for Boston residents with asthma. Inspectors look for pest infestations, mold, drafty windows or heat violations; all of which can make asthma worse. Often an ISD inspector will encounter bed bugs on a Breathe Easy inspection and will address them. If the patient does not have asthma, call the **Inspectional Services Department directly at (617) 635-5322** about bedbug concerns and inspectors will respond within 24 hours.

Bedbugs have not been found to transmit disease to humans and rarely cause allergic reactions. The bites, though, can cause itching, swelling, inflammation, and may interfere with sleep.

If the patient does not qualify for Breathe Easy or does not have known housing code violations, call the Environmental Hazards Department within the Boston Public Health Commission to respond to **bed bug** complaints as well as **asbestos, mold** and **air quality testing** at **617-534-5966**.



Once Inspectional Services hears about bed bug concerns, inspectors are sent within 24 hours to inspect.